

# Letters to the Editor

*J Clin Aesthet Dermatol* 2021;14(6):S23

## USE OF WEBINARS IN MEDICAL TRAINING IN DERMATOLOGY DURING COVID-19: A COMMENTARY

### Dear Editor:

Digital technology has been of utmost importance during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic for imparting education and training for dermatology residents and other medical trainees. The pandemic disrupted usual training and curriculum of medical trainees in various fields. In many cases, in-person teaching has been replaced by online teaching. Webinars, defined as "...digital tools to deliver training and education through synchronous audiovisual communication among remotely located training instructors and participants,"<sup>1</sup> are one of the many online educational/training tools used during the pandemic in many fields of medicine, including dermatology. But are webinars really suitable replacements for in-person training and classroom teaching for medical trainees?

In a survey-based study by Gegenfurtner et al<sup>1</sup> that evaluated learner reactions toward web-based training programs, surveyed trainees

indicated a general perception of webinars as "viable opportunities to deepen content from previous training sessions." Respondents indicated that they found webinars most useful in reinforcing or clarifying previously covered material and/or to fill in knowledge gaps, and often used webinars when preparing for exams; however, respondents indicated in-person classes/training sessions were more beneficial for learning more complex topics.

Another potential downside to online teaching/training via webinars is poor internet connection. Fast internet connections and problem-free technology are essential for engaging in educational webinars or other telehealth services. For example, a slow or spotty internet connection can cause lags or a dropped connection, disrupting the educational experience; this can be particularly problematic to dermatology residents and other medical professionals in training who often only have limited windows of time to schedule in educational webinars. I propose that while webinars can be useful educational tools in dermatology when it comes to exploring common dermatology topics (e.g., inflammatory dermatoses) or participating in continuing medical education courses, they are not suitable educational/training platforms for

complex dermatological topics (e.g., aesthetic dermatology, dermatosurgery).

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown, while subsiding in the United States, have taken away much of the crucial face-to-face training opportunities for medical trainees in dermatology. Though webinars continue to play an important role in the education of medical professionals in training, webinars cannot replace the classical didactical in-person learning environment.

### REFERENCES

1. Gegenfurtner A, Zitt A, Ebner, C. Evaluating webinar-based training: a mixed methods study of trainee reactions toward digital web conferencing. *Int J Train Dev*. 2020;24:5–21.

With regards,

**Yashdeep Singh Pathania, MD**

*Department of Dermatology, Venereology and Leprology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Jodhpur, India*

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Yashdeep Singh Pathania, MD;

Email: yashdeepsinghpathania@gmail.com

**FUNDING:** No funding was provided for this article.

**DISCLOSURES:** The author has no conflicts of interest relevant to the content of this article. **NPPA**